

# FROM the LAND



## Washinee Lake Conservation Easement Protects Rare Wetland Plants

**T**HE STRANGE AND BEAUTIFUL NORTHERN PITCHER PLANT, a carnivorous plant, abounds at Salisbury's Washinee Lake. This plant is a microcosm of the hundreds of intricate patterns of interaction among the organisms in communities. More invertebrate species depend on the pitcher plant than on any other peatland plant. Several insects live within the water-filled pitchers of the plant, and three moth species feed exclusively on this plant's tissues. In the lower portion of the pitcher, one can find midge larvae feeding on the insect prey the plant has entrapped. Other insects' larvae can be frozen in the pitcher fluid in the winter months, with 95% of them surviving until the spring thaw.

Through her recent donation of a 17-acre easement to The Nature Conservancy at Washinee Lake, however, Dr. Mary-Alice White has done far more than protect the fascinating, but relatively abundant pitcher plant. Dr. White's easement will help preserve habitat for several of Connecticut's severely threatened peatland species.

Washinee Lake is also home to the state-rare prairie sedge (*Carex prairea*), hard-stemmed bullrush (*Scirpus acutus*), swamp birch (*Betula pumila*), hoary willow (*Salix candida*), and to Connecticut's only extant populations of cyprus-like sedge (*Carex pseudocyperus*) and straight-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton strictifolius*). This unusual assemblage of plant communities has arisen because Washinee Lake is one of the state's few wetlands with a limestone substrate. Mr. Les

Mehrhoff, State Biologist with the Department of Environmental Protection, notes that "Because of unique soil and mineral conditions, this peatland supports a wide variety of rare and uncommon plants, more like what you might find in northern Maine than in Connecticut".

Peatlands, commonly referred to as "bogs", are wetlands whose soil

consists of incompletely decomposed plant and animal remains. Most peatland plants require low-nutrient conditions, and thus are extremely sensitive to any uses of surrounding uplands which increase nutrient input (e.g., fertilizer runoff). A conservation easement is an excellent mechanism for preventing incompatible uses of the wetland and the adjacent upland at this site.

A conservation easement is a legal agreement by which a landowner permanently surrenders certain uses of, and rights in, a piece of property – the right to build a house, for example – while still retaining title to the land. An easement runs with a property in perpetuity, meaning that the conservation-oriented restrictions will apply to any future owner of an eased property.

In the case of Washinee Lake, Dr. White has insured that her portion of the sensitive wetland edge of Washinee Lake will be protected in its natural state 'forever'. In addition,

Dr. White continues to play an active role locally in trying to protect Washinee Lake's overall water quality. "We owe a great debt of gratitude to Mary-Alice for her perseverance in protecting this valuable natural area," said Mehrhoff. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)





## Good Deeds

**I** BELIEVE IT IS SO IMPORTANT not to let the good deeds in life go unnoticed. This issue of *From the Land* reports on four landowners who voluntarily donated their land to the Connecticut Chapter to protect the rare and threatened species or unique habitats on their property. These good deeds certainly deserve special recognition.

Dr. Mary Alice White continues in her tradition of conservation leadership by giving a conservation easement on her rare wetland habitat at Washinee Lake. The donation of 28 acres of brackish tidal marsh in Lord Cove by Jane and Cottie Davison assures further preservation of this vital intertidal habitat along the Connecticut River. Our Burnham Brook Preserve was the recent beneficiary of George Hatfield's love for the land with his gift of a conservation easement on 40 acres along Strongs Brook. And, Edmund and Elizabeth Speer realized their life-long dream of protecting their land with a recent gift to the Chapter on Little Phillip Mountain.

Facilitating a landowner's good intentions is one of the most enjoyable yet weighty aspects of our work. At first glance, accepting a gift of land may seem like a simple decision. In fact, over half of all land transactions conducted by the Connecticut Chapter are the result of land donations. However, acceptance of these gifts brings enormous stewardship responsibilities since the Conservancy's commitment to these lands is, for all intents and purposes, in perpetuity.

What this means, unfortunately, is that while we would like to accommodate everyone's wishes, we don't have the resources that would allow this to happen. The Nature Conservancy can only accept land into our preserve system that is of high ecological value and that advances our mission of preserving habitat for rare and endangered species or important ecosystems.

So, what happens to the other inquiries for land protection? If the property is valuable open space or land with other natural resource values, the Conservancy works

with local land trusts, or other land conservation organizations, or the Department of Environmental Protection to ensure that adequate protection is sought.

If the property has no ecological or natural resource value, we accept the parcel as a tradeland gift, with the owner's consent that the property may be sold, with appropriate deed restrictions, and the proceeds used for the acquisition of other more critical habitat. With over 85% of Connecticut's undeveloped land remaining in private ownership, the important role of working with private landowners in preserving the state's dwindling habitats is obvious.

Protecting land involves careful evaluation and planning, including resource assessment, intended land use, stewardship and estate planning issues. When a landowner begins to think about the preservation of his or her property, a number of important questions immediately surface.

Qualified staff from the Conservancy are available to work with property owners, on a strictly confidential basis, to review conservation strategies and financial, tax, and estate planning alternatives. They will suggest solutions that will help landowners to both protect their land and provide attractive financial and tax planning opportunities for themselves and their heirs.

Limited funding for land purchases necessitates our reliance on landowners' innate respect and love for the land to provide for its preservation. Hundreds of private landowners have worked with the Connecticut Chapter to protect over 23,000 acres of habitat. Each and every Conservancy member can be proud of their own good deeds, which together are adding up to an impressive conservation legacy.

— LES COREY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Washinee Lake Easement

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



Dr. Mary-Alice White has been a longtime conservation leader in northwestern Connecticut. In 1983, Dr. White donated a 52-acre conservation easement along Moore Brook in Salisbury to The Nature Conservancy. She continues to work on a variety of land protection projects as Chairperson of the Land Trust Committee of the Salisbury Association.

Les Corey, Executive Director of the Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, praised Dr. White: "On a personal note, Mary-Alice has consistently demonstrated her desire to protect important natural areas in northwest Connecticut. We continue to be amazed at her energy when it comes to protecting the land she cares so deeply about".

The Nature Conservancy will establish a stewardship endowment for the 17-acre Washinee Lake easement property, providing funds for ongoing biological monitoring and site management activities to insure the wetland's long-term protection. 🌿

— CLAUDIA POLSKY

▲ Above: Hoary Willow, rare plant at Washinee Lake  
Pictured on Cover: Northern Pitcher Plant



# Lord Cove – Preserving It Piece by Piece

JANE AND ENDICOTT DAVISON OF LYME deeded four separate Lord Cove marshland parcels totalling 28.25 acres to the Connecticut Chapter at year-end. This gift brings Conservancy holdings at Lord Cove to 208 acres, all of it representing valuable habitat which has been protected piece by piece, through the gifts of 21 parcels of land. It is heartwarming to realize that these gifts were all made by landowners who felt this area was so special that it deserved the highest level of protection.

The Lord Cove Preserve stretches from the southern shore of Hamburg Cove to the marshes just south of the Lyme/Old Lyme town line on the eastern side of the Connecticut River. It is an ecologically important, brackish tidal marsh, bounded on one side by the Connecticut River and on the other side by Lord Creek.

Lord Cove is habitat for a tremendous concentration of wildlife. It is widely known as significant bird habitat, particularly for waterfowl, marshbirds and overwintering bald eagles. In addition, several species of statewide concern, both plant and animal, find refuge in the Lord Cove marshes.

Protection of Lord Cove has long been sought by the Connecticut Chapter as well as the State's Department of

Environmental Protection (DEP) and local Land Trusts. The extensive area of brackish tidal marsh, freshwater marsh and associated flood plain, and adjacent uplands, has remained relatively undisturbed, and as such is considered a priority for preservation. In total, between State land, local Land Trust and Conservancy property holdings, more than 600 acres at Lord Cove have received permanent protection.

One of the best ways to explore Lord Cove is by canoe, which is exactly what we did on a warm December day last year. As there was no wind, we were able to explore the creeks and the marshes with ease. At one point, two bald eagles flew up from the woods and across our path. In all, it was a memorable experience that we would recommend. The only sound we heard came from the construction of the abutments for the new Baldwin Bridge. Hard to believe that we were within sight of the heavily traveled I-95.

Les Corey, Executive Director of the Connecticut Chapter, praised the Davison's for their wonderful gift, commenting "Thanks to the generosity of Jane and Cottie Davison, one of the Connecticut River's most ecologically important marshes has received a higher degree of protection now and for the future." 🌿

— CAROLIE EVANS

## The Nature Conservancy At Work

	Worldwide	Connecticut
Total Projects	11,224	603
Total Acres Protected	5,178,764	18,659
Total Acres Registered	340,330	4,824
Total Acres Saved	5,519,094	23,483
Members	588,567	14,500
Corporate Associates	418	15



▲ Great blue heron



◀ Lord Cove marshes, Lyme Connecticut



# Burnham Brook Preserve Gains Easement Protection

## Dr. Richard Goodwin Receives National Environmental Merit Award

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the environment, Dr. Richard H. Goodwin was recently awarded an annual Merit Award by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Goodwin, who served as national President of The Nature Conservancy, as well as being one of the four founders and Chairman for the Connecticut Chapter, was one of 27 Merit Award winners at the EPA's recent 20th Anniversary celebration. He currently serves on the Chapter's Science and Stewardship Committee.

Goodwin, an ecologist by training, and the Katharine Blunt Professor Emeritus of Botany at Connecticut College, has authored many important scientific and popular publications, including "Inland Wetlands of the U.S.". As an active negotiator in dozens of critical habitat acquisitions, Goodwin has made an immeasurable contribution at the state, national, and international level.

"Protecting our environment must become a cause that we are all committed to," said EPA administrator Julie Belaga. "We need more individuals like Richard Goodwin—people willing to take the lead and fight for a cleaner, healthier environment".

We, the staff and trustees of the Connecticut Chapter, extend our congratulations to Dick on earning this prestigious award. He deserves this and more, as far as we are concerned. We are glad to see he is being nationally recognized as a leader in natural area conservation.

— SUSAN BAHR

*Dick Goodwin being given Merit award  
by EPA Administrator Julie Belaga.*

**G**EORGE HATFIELD OF EAST HADDAM has placed nearly half of his 98 acre homestead under conservation easement. This easement, totalling 40.7 acres, provides wonderful protection to Strongs Brook which forms the southern boundary of the Burnham Brook Preserve.

By placing his rear land under easement, George Hatfield has achieved multiple goals. He has added a level of protection to Strongs Brook and to the adjoining wetlands, prohibiting any future development. At the same time, the easement allows for George and his heirs to continue to own and enjoy the protected area. In addition, he has reduced the value of his estate, since the land will be forever valued as open space, thereby reducing the amount of inheritance tax his heirs would have otherwise had to assume. (For estate tax purposes land must be valued at its "highest and best use".)

Burnham Brook Preserve is one of the Connecticut Chapter's largest preserves. It also holds special significance since it is one that Dick and Esther Goodwin have personally committed much of their lives to assembling. Since 1960, while Dick was serving as the Conservancy's national President, the Goodwins have been a motivating force of protection work here. As the preserve stands today, this protection encompasses a total of 435 acres, with another 94 acres (including the Hatfield

property) under conservation easement.

In addition, and also as a result of the Goodwins' interests, Burnham Brook continues to be the site of ongoing scientific research. For example, researchers from the Yale Medical School have studied the vectors of the Lyme disease here; rainfall acidity has been measured here since 1982; a study of the relationship between size of forest remnants and the presence of interior forest species of birds has been carried out under the direction of Dr. Robert Askins, a faculty member at Connecticut College; and a study of the impact of deer browse on forest structure was carried out in 1987, just to mention a few.

Today, as conservation becomes more challenging, much thought is being given to the protection of wildlife corridors and greenbelts. Burnham Brook, with the nearby 700 acre Devils Hopyard State Park, may again be serving as an example of how this might work. Between the two protected areas, a wildlife corridor of impressive dimensions exists. If we are to preserve some of Connecticut for future generations, it is apparent that we must focus on protecting large and important ecosystems.

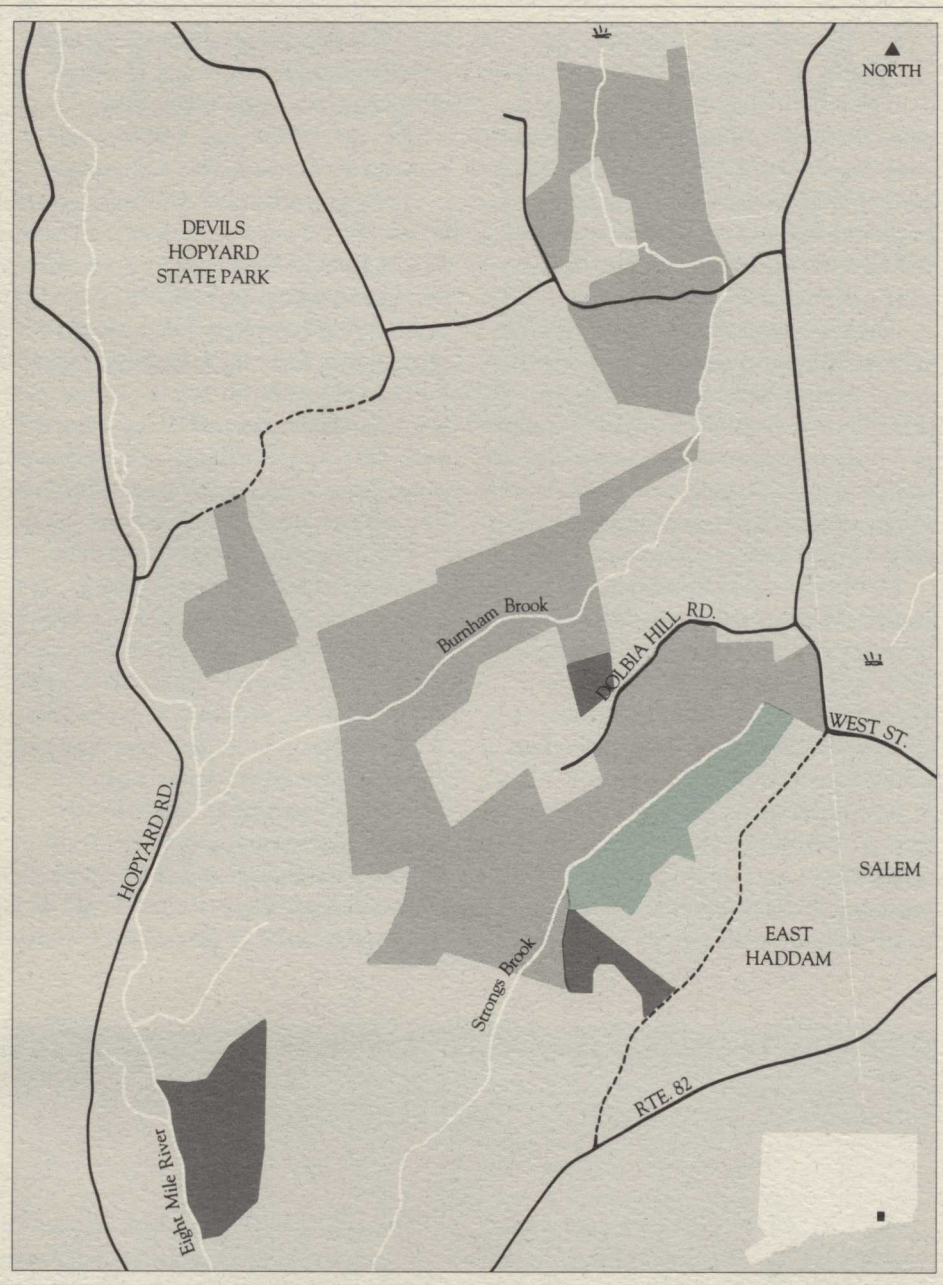
Our thanks again to George Hatfield, and to the Goodwins, for their perseverance and enthusiasm in protecting this valuable natural area. They both set an outstanding example for other landowners and conservationists! 🌿

— CAROLIE EVANS



Courtesy of EPA





## BURNHAM BROOK PRESERVE

- Hatfield Easement 40.7 acres
- The Nature Conservancy
- TNC Conservation Easement

## Wildlife Abounds at Burnham Brook

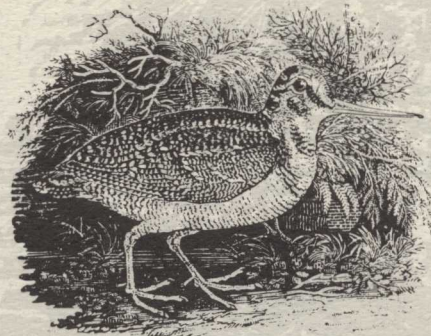
The Burnham Brook Preserve encompasses a major part of the Burnham Brook watershed. Heavily wooded, the preserve reveals an extensive array of wildlife. Over a hundred species of trees, shrubs, and vines; better than 380 herbaceous flowering plants; and more than thirty species of ferns, clubmosses, and horsetails are found here. In addition, the preserve supports a wealth of mosses, liverworts, lichens, and literally hundreds of fungi.

Also included in the preserve's inventory are more than 60 species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. About 180 species of birds have been sighted and the stewardship committee has undertaken several censuses of those that are regular breeders within the preserve.



## Devil's Den Agrees to Protect Adjacent 85 Acres

American woodcock



WITH AN OVERWHELMING SHOW OF SUPPORT, the Town of Weston voted to purchase, at the bargain price of \$596,000, over 85 acres of woodland owned by Bridgeport Hydraulic Company (BHC). Management of this land, "to be forever maintained in its natural state", will be the responsibility of The Nature Conservancy's Devil's Den Preserve.

These 85 acres have particular ecological significance because they form a wildlife corridor. They connect Devil's Den to other lands owned and managed by Bridgeport Hydraulic as watershed properties with open space that is extensive enough, as a single contiguous tract, to support a wide range of plant and animal species.

Devil's Den, the Connecticut Chapter's largest preserve, totals nearly 1,600 acres of protected habitat. It was established in 1966 when Weston resident, Katharine Ordway, gave the Chapter a magnificent gift of \$700,000 to acquire this tract from the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company.

Recent research indicates species extinction rates in a preserve may depend on the size of a preserve. Consequently, maintaining the existing corridor of protected habitat between Devil's Den and

BHC's watershed lands increases the probability that existing species populations on these lands will be preserved. And, nowhere in Connecticut is this perhaps more significant, and important, than in the increasingly developed Fairfield County.

The topography and plant communities on the 85 acres are very similar to what is already found at Devil's Den – a mixed hardwood forest with oaks, maples, American beech and yellow birch. This addition also supports two large wetlands that are unique for Devil's Den and provide habitat for many species, including several American woodcock that were flushed from at least one nest as the Preserve Managers, Steve Patton and Lise Hanners inspected the parcel.

Many individuals in the town led the charge to protect this parcel addition, including John Stripp, George Guidera, and Richard Bochinski, who all helped negotiate the sale. Charlie Putnam of the Aspetuck Land Trust, and Ellen Strauss of "Keep Weston Rural", encouraged people to go to the town hall and show their support. Many "Friends Of Devil's Den" came and were heard at all three public forums. Thanks to all of this enthusiastic support, another piece of Fairfield County is protected.

– STEPHEN PATTON & LISE HANNERS

### Wish List

There are many ways to contribute to the protection of Connecticut's natural areas. If you can help us with any of the following items, please call the Chapter offices at 344-0716.

- Kodak slide projector
- Kodak slide carousel
- Projector carrying case
- Video-cassette recorder

### 'Tis Best to Give . . . and Receive

MANY CONSERVANCY MEMBERS would like to increase their annual contribution to a favorite land conservation project, but feel constrained by their current financial conditions. What they don't know is that under the right circumstances, and with a little bit of planning, they can give away some of their assets and earn more than they did beforehand!

Here's how it works. Let's assume you own highly appreciated, but low yielding securities or real estate. If you donate your asset to The Nature Conservancy, we will

sell it, invest the proceeds, and pay interest income to you for the remainder of your lifetime. After your death, The Nature Conservancy receives the principal from your donation. Or, if you prefer, you can designate another person as the beneficiary and we will provide them with interest income for their lifetime.

This type of donation, known as a Life Income Gift, can actually increase your annual income. There are three reasons why this is the case. First, there is no capital gains tax liability under most life income plans when appreciated real estate or securities



# Bloomfield Residents Donate Woodland Tract

**M**R. AND MRS. EDMUND SPEER OF BLOOMFIELD have donated approximately 9.5 acres of woodland to the Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. A mixed hardwood forest with spectacular views of adjacent Metropolitan District Company lands, this property is part of the West Hartford watershed and protects a portion of Little Phillip Mountain. It also provides a buffer-zone of protected habitat along streams that feed into the District's #6 reservoir.

"The Nature Conservancy extends a sincere thank you to the Speers for the generous donation of this beautiful woodland habitat," said Mr. Leslie N. Corey, Executive Director of The Connecticut Chapter. "They have shown a continuing interest in protecting land that can be left as a natural legacy, in Connecticut and elsewhere," Corey continued.

In addition to their Bloomfield property, the Speers have also donated approximately 50 acres in Cookeville, Vermont to the Connecticut River Watershed Council for conservation. And, most recently, they are seeking out an American conservation group that will accept a gift of another 80 acres they hold in the southwest region of

France. "They are enthusiastic conservationists and we applaud their spirit," Corey emphasized.

"My husband and I made the decision when we were first married, that every time we thought we would need a new car, we would buy land instead," said Mrs. Speer. "Our intention, then and now, is that we want to give these lands to our Country, to leave them forever wild," she continued.

With the Water District lands and nearby Talcott Mountain State Park, the Speer property helps augment this assembled wildlife corridor, totalling several hundred acres of undeveloped woods in Bloomfield and Simsbury. These forested lands provide the kind of habitat necessary to many mammals and birds, and are just the kind of large, unfragmented natural places that have become so threatened here in Connecticut.

Located at the end of Juniper Road in Bloomfield, this newly acquired parcel will be accessible for nature observation and passive recreation. The views are impressive, and a spring hike through the area is a nice way to enjoy this gift to nature from the Speers. 🌿

— SUSAN BAHR

are sold in order to reinvest for a high yield.

Second, there can be a significant income tax deduction for your gift. The size of the deduction depends on several factors including the ages of the income beneficiaries, the type of life income plan you choose, and the payout of the plan.

Third, Life Income Plans can often provide a substantially higher yield than currently being received from your securities or real estate.

In many cases, the combination of these three factors provides donors with more annual income than they would have

received had they either held on to their asset, or sold it in order to reinvest the proceeds in a higher yielding investment. In addition to the higher income for the donor, The Nature Conservancy can benefit from the gift of real estate or securities.

Of course, everyone's situation is unique. Conservancy staff would be happy to review a variety of options with you should this program be of interest to you. For more information on Life Income Gifts, please call Tom McGuigan at the Connecticut Chapter. All inquiries will be held in strict confidence.

— TOM MCGUIGAN

## Feed Our Kitty...



Industrial sites, office buildings, any surplus appreciated real property can be turned into a conservation contribution at The Nature Conservancy. Find out how your gift of real estate can help the Conservancy provide shelter for wildlife... and for your income. Write or call our field office to learn more about "trade lands" today.



## Connecticut Chapter Hosts Panama Conservation Leader

For those wishing to help ANCON (or other TNC partner organizations) with their work in the tropics, the Connecticut Chapter has established a Global Conservation Fund, such that members may earmark contributions to the Connecticut Chapter for this purpose. Members can then receive the tax-deductibility advantage of having contributed to a U.S. charitable organization, while having their dollars support Latin American conservation projects. For further information, contact the Connecticut Chapter office in Middletown.

Park Guards at Darien National Park, Panama



Courtesy of ANCON

WHERE CAN YOU FIND a three-toed sloth; the frog (*Physalaemus pustulosus*) with the most complex song of any frog known on earth; more bird species (900) than in the United States and Canada combined; and a plant compound which is being actively investigated as a potential cure for AIDS? . . . all in a land area the size of Tennessee? PANAMA.

The Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy recently hosted Juan Carlos Navarro, Executive Director of Panama's national conservation organization ANCON, during two days of presentations to staff and Acorn members on the theme of "protecting Panama's natural heritage". Navarro's February visit was part of the Chapter's ongoing efforts to promote global conservation by assisting TNC's Latin American partner organizations.

The mission of ANCON ('Asociacion Nacional para la Conservacion de la Naturaleza') is to ensure that the myriad natural wonders of Panama escape destruction. "We have five to ten years left to preserve the natural heritage of Panama," said Navarro. He described the threats posed to the rainforests by commercial loggers, land speculators, and to a much lesser extent, local users of forest products.

As a first step, ANCON has worked to insure that the country's many "paper parks" – those officially designated as

national parks, but lacking sufficient personnel and attention – receive meaningful protection on the ground. Until recently, Darien National Park, the largest "protected" area in Central America, had but 6 park rangers. Thanks to ANCON, this ranger force has been trebled, to 18. In Soberania National Park, ANCON has achieved its goal of full on-the-ground demarcation of boundaries, using three-string wire fences which are readily understood by any would-be encroachers. This Park also has ANCON to thank for its fully equipped cadre of park rangers.

In its land conservation projects, ANCON works closely with the local communities dependent on forest products for their livelihood to ensure that their resource needs are met. By establishing an experimental agroforestry area near Soberania, for example, ANCON both created local employment and increased the quantity of renewable resources – firewood and food crops – available for local consumption.

ANCON's methods for protecting Panama's biological diversity are many. Navarro notes that with national parks just a short distance from Panama city, his country has "the most accessible lowland tropical forest in the Americas". In the calmer political climate of the post-Noriega years, ANCON hopes to develop the enormous eco-tourism potential of the country.

A still more important ANCON goal is to establish a system of private, non-profit environmental corporations in Panama, capitalizing on the country's strong private ownership tradition. The Nature Conservancy has helped ANCON considerably in this area, by sharing its own experience in membership solicitation; by making outright financial donations; and by forging links between ANCON and Conservancy donors with expressed international conservation interests.

This was Mr. Navarro's second visit to Connecticut in recent years, and the Chapter looks forward to continued work with this extremely effective Central American partner organization.

— CLAUDIA POLSKY



# Birds of Prey in Connecticut

**D**O YOU KNOW what the term "birder" means; or could you describe a raptor? If either question has a familiar ring to you, a quick visit to your local bookstore may yield some answers. In his new book, *Birds of Prey in Connecticut, A Guide to Finding and Understanding Hawks, Eagles, Vultures and Owls*, Gene Billings explains a lot about these extraordinary birds, raptors and other birds of prey.

From Gene's perspective, his book serves two purposes. "This is a book about raptors, but is intended also to be a book about conservation," he explains. "Birds of prey are barometers of the health of our environment. They are among the most sensitive living organisms to environmental degradation, and are therefore uniquely valuable as leading indicators of problems

in the earth's natural systems," he states. "The two subjects are intrinsically and inevitably related".

Throughout his book, Gene details information that addresses how the occurrence of raptors may well point to environmental vitality or degeneration. It is a book with appeal to anyone with an interest in these birds, but is carefully designed for amateur birders. It includes beautiful illustrations drawn by area artist and naturalist Ms. Julie Zickefoose.

Printed on recycled paper, Gene's book is available through many local bookstores or by writing to the Connecticut Chapter. The cost to purchase the book from the Chapter is \$29.00 which includes state tax, postage and handling charges. 🌿

— DOROTHY MILLEN



Susan Bahr

## New Employee

DAVID SUTHERLAND, our new Director of Government Relations, came to us in December from the Connecticut Audubon Society where he was the Director of Environmental Affairs. With Audubon, David led the successful lobbying efforts at the State Capitol for the 1990 Environmental Fees Bill. He currently serves as a member of the General Assembly's Environmental Fees Task Force, which is studying funding for the Department of Environmental Protection.

In 1989 David coordinated lobbying on behalf of the Endangered Species Act, for which he received a Certificate of Special Recognition from the Conservancy. He was also co-chair of the Connecticut Clean Water Coalition, an alliance of 16 state environmental organizations.

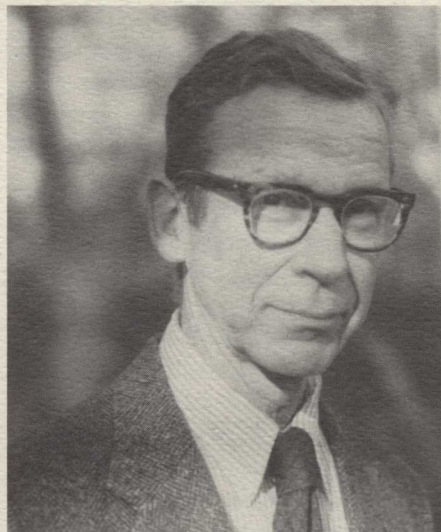
David, who holds a Master's degree in Environmental Studies from Antioch University, co-authored the 1986 Report by the Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality on the state's Inland Wetland statutes. He and his wife, Re, have a one-year old son, Lucas, who they adopted from Costa Rica last year.

## T R U S T E E P R O F I L E

**C**ONNECTICUT CHAPTER TRUSTEE, A. EUGENE BILLINGS, is a wonderful friend of the Connecticut Chapter. Gene, as he is known by his friends, is a quiet man with tremendous commitment to the Connecticut Chapter. He is an avid naturalist, an active birder, and the focus of our Spring Members' Niche profile.

Gene hails from Norfolk. He is a Connecticut Chapter Acorn and has been a loyal Conservancy member since 1976. Currently, he is also the Treasurer of our Board of Trustees and serves on both the Science & Stewardship Committee and Finance & Administration Committee. He also provides invaluable leadership by actively overseeing the stewardship of our Beckley Bog and Silas Hall Pond Preserves.

Gene recently finished his first book (see "Birds of Prey" article), but is no stranger to the pen. He has been professionally published through his work as an executive at



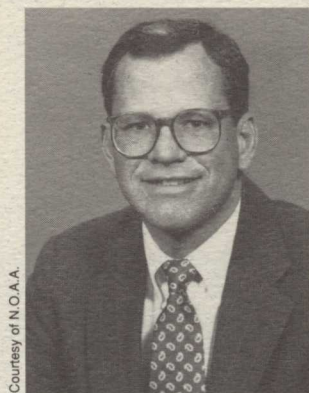
Dorothy Millen

Travelers Insurance and has written a variety of nature publications and trail guides.

Gene is a delight to work with, and we are indeed, truly indebted to him for his diligence and committed support to our conservation efforts. 🌿

— DOROTHY MILLEN





Courtesy of NOAA

Timothy Keeney,  
Connecticut's new DEP Commissioner

## An Interview with Timothy Keeney Connecticut's New DEP Commissioner

**T**IMOTHY KEENEY, Lowell Weicker's choice to be the fifth Commissioner of Connecticut's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), has been on the job since the end of February. Even before Keeney stepped into the position, however, staff from the Connecticut Chapter of the Conservancy had traveled to his now-former offices at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (N.O.A.A.) in Washington, D.C. to discuss Connecticut habitat protection priorities and a wide range of other environmental concerns.

As Director of The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management at N.O.A.A., Keeney was quite familiar with The Nature Conservancy. He had already been involved with a very broad range of environmental protection activities involving the Conservancy, and in particular, referenced our efforts to preserve portions of the Florida Keys.

Keeney, a native of Hartford who has maintained a home in Somers, stated that the desire to return to Connecticut was a major factor in his decision to accept the challenging post at DEP. "I think that Connecticut has a very well-schooled constituency, with a great deal of interest in the environment" he said, adding that the breadth of DEP's responsibilities was another attraction. The other main motivation in accepting Weicker's offer was his close relationship with the new governor.

Governor Weicker first met Keeney when he was the Naval officer in charge of the recovery team for Apollo XVII in 1972. "Each of the officers on the boat was to be assigned to escort one of the many politicians who were going to be on board for a few days to observe the recovery," Keeney related. "I looked over the list and chose Weicker since I had admired his work in the House and Senate." That the two hit it off well was evidenced when Keeney joined the then Senator's staff in 1976 as a legislative analyst. In that position he had the opportunity to work on many environmental bills, reflecting Weicker's interests in coastal and conservation issues.

Keeney traces his own interest in environmental policy back to his studies at the University of Connecticut Law School. "With my particular course of study, I was allowed two elective papers; I chose environmental issues for both, and found them to be fascinating topics," Keeney recalled.

After serving on Weicker's staff, Keeney was able to further broaden his legal expertise when he became majority clerk and counsel to the Senate Appropriations Committee. His extensive work with budgetary issues in that position should prove useful as he tackles one of his major priorities at the DEP, obtaining more funding for that agency.

Keeney emphasized that another primary concern in his new position would be the protection of critical wetlands. A prerequisite to meaningful protection, he maintained, must be a means of ranking different wetlands to determine their relative importance. "In a state like Connecticut, we are simply not going to be able to save every single acre, so we must have a way of knowing which wetlands need our utmost protection efforts". Keeney also said that education about the role of wetlands in natural systems is a crucial component of an effective preservation program.

In a broader sense, the new Commissioner sees education as a high priority for much of the DEP. "Without education about why a resource is important, and where it fits in to the total picture, you're cut down before you've started," Keeney stated in reference to protection and enforcement efforts.

While acknowledging the staggering budget problems facing the new administration, and the constraints that they might place on current bond expenditures for open space acquisition, Keeney stated his deep personal commitment to land conservation and his intention to pursue efforts in that area when fiscal conditions permit.

The Conservancy welcomes Tim Keeney back to his home state, and looks forward to working with him over the next few years to preserve the special habitats and character of Connecticut.

— DAVID SUTHERLAND

### Thanks Leslie, We Will Miss You

The Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy would like to extend a special note of gratitude to former Commissioner, Leslie Carothers, for her ardent support of open space preservation during her tenure at the Department of Environmental Protection. She was also directly involved in securing the passage of Connecticut's Endangered Species law.

Leslie gave considerable encouragement to the Conservancy and other conservation groups as they were forming the Land Conservation Coalition in 1987. The Coalition's success in obtaining substantially increased funding for the Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Fund was due in no small part to her support for the program.

Leslie's commitment and expertise in many areas of environmental protection have left a significant mark on the DEP and Connecticut's natural resources. The Conservancy wishes her the best in her future work.

### From The Land

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# Chapter Acorns View Eagles on the Connecticut River



Members of the Connecticut Chapter view two bald eagles on a special Acorn member boat trip on the Connecticut River on February 23rd. Acorns are Conservancy members who contribute \$100 or more annually to Chapter operations. Connecticut Acorns are exempt from national membership dues notices, are invited on Acorn trips, and receive early notices for special events.

Support the Connecticut Chapter by joining the growing number of Connecticut Acorns today. Just clip the coupon below and return it to the Chapter office. 🌿

## Connecticut Chapter Acorns Are Among Our Most Valued Members!

YES, I'd like to join the ranks of Connecticut Acorns. Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution.

☐ \$100    ☐ \$200    ☐ \$300    ☐ \$400    ☐ \$500

Name (as printed on your mailing label) \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make checks payable to The Nature Conservancy and mail to 55 High Street, Middletown, CT 06457-3788. Thank you.

NL5/91

May 18 (Saturday), 6AM - 10AM  
Spring Bird Migration Walk at Devil's Den.  
Join Director Steve Patton to learn about birds as they return north to breed.

May 19 (Sunday), 10AM - 12PM  
Spring Trees at the Katharine Ordway Preserve.  
Join Fred Moore to enjoy the lush growth of Spring.

May 19 (Sunday), 10AM - 12PM  
Family Natural History Walk at Devil's Den.  
Join Annette Lusardi on a spring walk through the Den.

June 2 (Sunday) 1PM - 3PM  
Summer Wildflowers at Devil's Den.  
Enjoy the summer flora with Pam Sapko and Peggy French.

June 8 (Saturday) 10AM - 12PM  
Flowering Mountain Laurel Walk at Devil's Den.  
Join Fred Moore to enjoy the laurels in bloom.

June 8 (Saturday) 10AM - 12PM  
A Rainbow in Devil's Den.  
Bring your elementary school-age children for this wonderful exploration of the colors of the Den. Volunteer Helen Welch will lead the walk.

June 15 (Saturday) 6AM - 10AM  
Breeding Birds of Devil's Den  
Join Assistant Director Lise Hanners to practice your bird song identification.

June 29 (Saturday) 9AM - 11AM  
Family Natural History Walk at Devil's Den.  
Join Annette Lusardi for a stroll in the Den.

July 20 (Saturday) 9AM - 11AM  
Reptiles and Amphibians of the Den.  
Help Steve Patton turn over logs and look for life at the Den.

July 22 - 26  
Work Party Week  
To help control exotic plant species (primarily purple loosestrife and phragmites) that are harmful to natural plant communities in our preserves, we are holding a series of work parties. Chapman's Pond, in East Haddam, and Bauer Woods, in Salisbury will be our focus. If you are interested in participating in these essential mid-summer habitat protection efforts, please contact David Gumbart by July 5th. He can be reached at the Chapter office, 344-0716 for more details.

July 27 (Saturday) 9AM - 11AM  
Family Natural History Walk at Devil's Den.  
Join Annette Lusardi for a stroll in the Den.

August 24 (Saturday) 9AM - 11AM  
Family Natural History Walk at Devil's Den.  
This is the last chance of the summer - join us to explore the Den.

NOTE: For information on any of the Devil's Den or Katharine Ordway hikes, please contact either Steve Patton or Lise Hanners at Devil's Den Preserve (226 - 4991).



**The Nature Conservancy** 🌿

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## Connecticut River Gateway Commission Pledges \$50,000 for Chapman Pond

**T**HE CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION voted in early March to extend a \$50,000 challenge grant to the Connecticut Chapter to be used for the recent 83 acre acquisition of the Ballek property at Chapman Pond. This grant will come from the Commission's Connecticut River Endowment fund established to protect scenic land along the river. The Commission, in fact, owns an adjacent 35 acre parcel that lies between the Conservancy's Chapman Pond Preserve and Gillette Castle State Park. As part of our agreement, the Conservancy will grant the Gateway Commission an easement with certain conservation restrictions on the newly acquired Ballek property.

"This outstanding pledge is yet another indicator that the Gateway Commission is one of the most important partners the Conservancy has in securing the natural integrity of the lower Connecticut River," said Les Corey, Executive Director of the Connecticut Chapter. "We are most appreciative of this extraordinary show of support, and the trustees and staff of the Conservancy extend a wholehearted thanks to the members of the Commission who made this major contribution possible," Corey continued.

This is by no means the first time the Gateway Commission and the Conservancy have worked together to secure critical Connecticut River habitat. In 1982, the Commission contributed \$300,000 to first establish protection at Chapman Pond.

Then again, in 1987, the Commission voted to support the Conservancy's acquisition of critical habitat at Selden Creek with a \$50,000 challenge grant.

Since its formation by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1973, the Commission has been instrumental in preserving about 900 acres of scenic upland at key locations within the lower Connecticut River valley. The long-range target is to protect an additional 2,500 acres, or approximately 10% of the land within the Commission's jurisdiction (from Middletown south to the river's mouth). The Commission protects these parcels primarily through the application of conservation restrictions.

This \$50,000 challenge grant will be paid to the Conservancy contingent on TNC's ability to raise the first \$225,000 of the \$275,000 fundraising goal. We encourage TNC members and friends to contribute to the Chapman Pond Campaign to help achieve our goal and meet the requirements of the Gateway Commission challenge grant. 🌿

— SUSAN BAHR

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